

THE
"CAPE PLAYGROUND"

The Story of the
CAPE PLAYHOUSE
and the
CAPE CINEMA



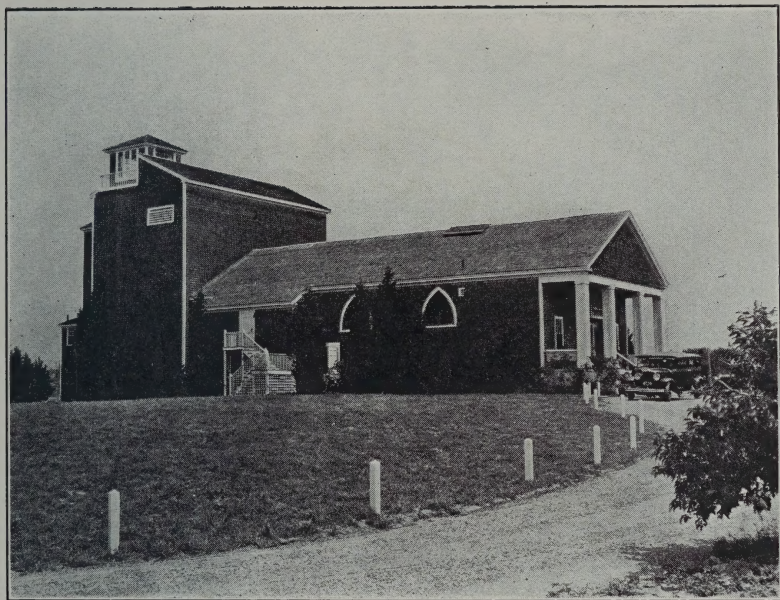
DENNIS - - CAPE COD - - MASSACHUSETTS

"Imagine a moving picture theatre out in the middle of a stonewall enclosed pasture, a theatre that has felt the hands of Rockwell Kent and Jo Mielziner — a gem of architecture. Picture a farm of twenty-seven acres with a rustic playhouse inviting Alice Brady, Chrystal Herne, Henry Hull and other Broadway stars; a farm that embraces two playhouses, one for the best of the legitimate theatre, the other for the best in the talking screen; actors' houses, scene shop, old-fashioned gardens and pools, trees and green grass, oil lamps along the driveway, and the warm Cape waters licking the sandy shore line.

"This is the Cape Playhouse and The Cape Cinema, a dream come true, that has attracted the attention of the theatrical and playgoing world as nothing else has since the Provincetown Players came off the Cape to bring Eugene O'Neill to fame and fortune. It is the dream of a young artist, Raymond Moore, who has transformed a wilderness off the beaten path into a thing of beauty, and at the same time has breathed into the legitimate theatre a new life and vigor.

"With an audience for the legitimate theatre and the talking picture, Raymond Moore has not embraced one to the exclusion of the other; but seeing the possibilities in both, presents both to his public in the best possible form... At the same time he has proved that art can flourish in the dirt road and oil lamp belt as well as on Broadway in the 40's.

JOHN BARRY in the BOSTON GLOBE.



The Cape Playhouse, one of the most Successful Summer Theatres in America

AMONG modern points of interest on picturesque Cape Cod, none is more attractive nor amazing to visitors than the "Cape Playground," at Dennis. This project, unique in the theatrical world, has been conceived and developed in a brief four years by Raymond Moore, owner and managing director of the Cape Playhouse, a summer theatre for New York plays and casts, and the new Cape Cinema, which has been pronounced by world-famous artists, architects and newspaper critics "the most beautiful small picture playhouse in America."

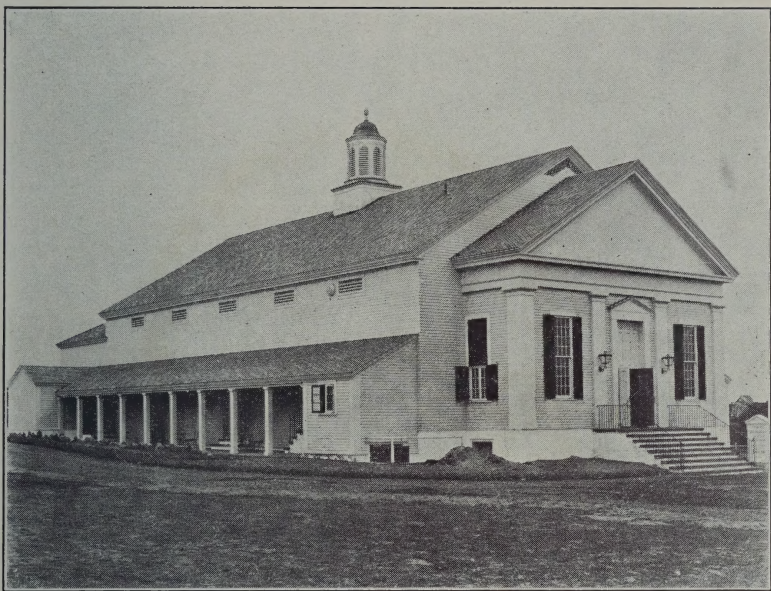
These two theatres are the center of one of the most complete and successful summer theatrical projects in America today. The buildings stand on twenty-seven acres of land, situated between lovely Scargo Lake and the ocean. Besides the theatres there is a scene shop, where all the settings used in the Play-



Scene Shop, adjacent to Cape Playhouse

house productions are planned, built and painted; an actors' inn for the players; actors' restaurant conducted by Miss Georgie Mason, whose cooking has for years been famous on the Cape; and special private cottages for those actors who arrive with families, servants, or both. Mr. Moore's own cottage is near at hand, also the picturesque small Cape Cod house occupied by Miss Cora Fitzgerald, business manager of the enterprise. On the grounds, there are two acres of flower gardens, a gold-fish pond and landscaped woodland, kept in order for the enjoyment of players and visitors alike.

The idea for a modern "Cape Playground" was conceived only in 1927, when Raymond Moore, then one of the younger group of Provincetown artists, found himself fascinated by an old church in Dennis which was for sale at a bargain price. Moore, a young Marylander, found himself while a student at



The Cape Cinema, pronounced the "Most Beautiful Picture Theatre in America"

Leland Stanford University, keenly interested in the theatre. However, after graduation he began his career teaching English and Botany, then his interest turned to painting, and he joined the artist colony at Provincetown.

The haunting sign "For Sale" on an old Dennis church brought suddenly and forcibly back his yearnings toward the theatre. He bought the church, partly with a few hundred dollars he had saved while teaching, and partly with small funds, borrowed from a few enthusiastic friends. He and a group of these supporters converted the church into a playhouse, and in the Spring of 1927 began to organize the Cape Playhouse company, which today is one of the most popular resort theatres in the world.

Mr. Moore's ambition was to do good New York plays with Broadway casts, weekly each summer on the Cape, and with

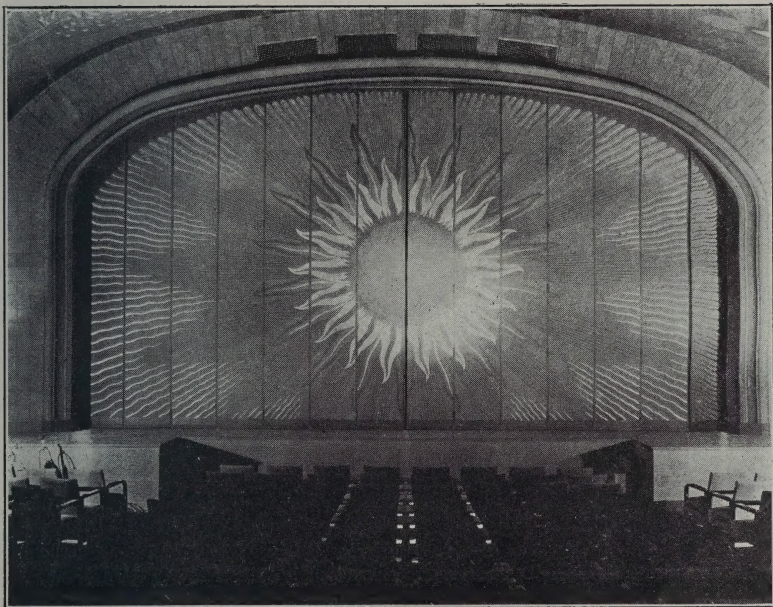


Interior of "World's Most Beautiful Picture Theatre" — The Cape Cinema

the help of a few well-known actors who knew and admired the young man's courage, he had in his first season's company such celebrities as Peggy Wood, Basil Rathbone, Minor Watson, Violet Kemble Cooper, Janet Beecher, Laura Hope Crews, Leonard Mudie and Romney Brent.

The first Playhouse season, to its owner's complete surprise, was not only an artistic but also a financial success. Mr. Moore was encouraged to expand a little the next year. He built a scene shop in back of the Playhouse, and installed his own staff to design, construct and paint the scenery.

He also acquired a Cape Cod cottage built in 1670, remodeled it slightly, and buying with it a piece of land which adjoined the Playhouse property, he moved into it himself.



Modernistic Curtain, designed by Rockwell Kent for The Cape Cinema

His second season attracted a new group of well-known Broadway players, who found great appeal in the idea of gaining experience, in the summer, playing a series of roles; and at the same time enjoying a holiday, with the ocean and the lake at their disposal for swimming, and far more comforts than they could find at the usual summer resort. Miss Cora Fitzgerald now became business manager for Mr. Moore, a post she has since filled with great sagacity and charm.

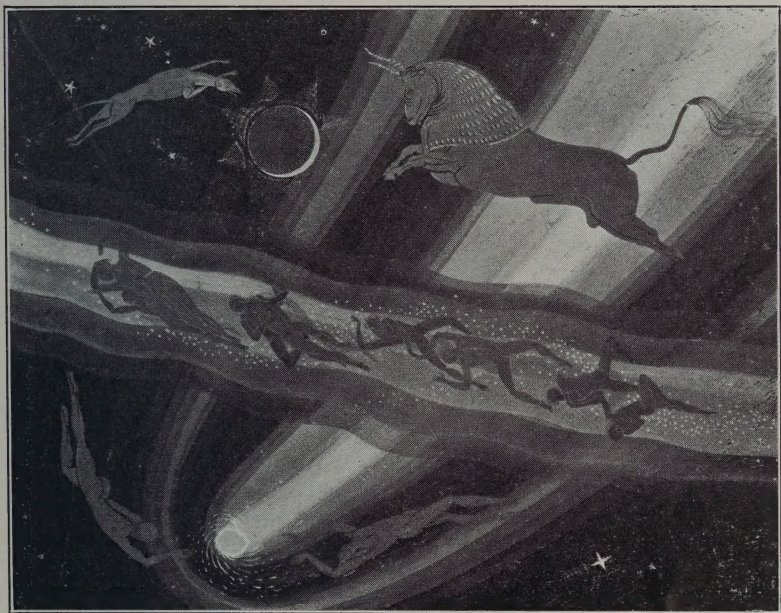
Last season Mr. Moore laid active plans for the new talking picture theatre, the Cape Cinema, which has already become famous for its artistic beauty. Several celebrated foreigners who have visited it, among them Mrs. Knute Rasmussen, wife of the Danish explorer, have acclaimed the Cinema the most artistic small playhouse in the entire world. It is unique in conception, architecture and decoration.



Decoration by Rockwell Kent for Cape Cinema

Mr. Moore wanted his new theatre to be artistic, intelligent and comfortable. It was designed by Alfred Easton Poor, one of the most prominent of the younger New York architects, and winner of the government award for the Wright memorial at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Mr. Poor, himself a one-time Provincetown artist and a lover of Cape Cod, determined that the Cinema should conform to the simplicity and picturesqueness of Cape architecture, so he used an old church at Centerville as a suggestion for his main plan. The Cinema is painted white, is a model of architectural beauty, and embodies all the latest improvements in acoustics, ventilation and comfort.

The principal feature of the interior is a gigantic mural decoration by Rockwell Kent, world-renowed artist, who in



Mural by Rockwell Kent and Jo Mielziner at the Cape Cinema

collaboration with Jo Mielziner, New York scenic artist, designed this painting which is the largest single canvas in the world today. It vaults the entire ceiling of the theatre, and extends from the wainscoting, which is of slate tiles. Both these famous artists took a deep sentimental interest in decorating the Cape Cinema. Kent had his start as a painter in Barnstable, coming to the Cape with his family when he was only seventeen. Young Mielziner, whose father is Leo Mielziner, the portrait painter, has spent his summers with his parents at Truro, since he was a small boy.

The mural itself is a modernistic concept of the heavens. Its actual measurement is 6400 square feet, twice the size of Tintoretto's "Paradise" at the Doges Palace, Venice, which formerly held the record as the world's largest canvas.



Individual Figures, from Mural
by Rockwell Kent

Mr. Kent's only explanation of the mural's subject is that he conceived it "to make people think." Already celebrities of art, social and literary circles have come from many cities and countries, and placed their own interpretation upon the great work. It displays the sky in gorgeous colorings, with a comet flashing across the heavens pursued by eager figures of men. In another direction extends the grey haze of the Milky Way, peopled by pairs of leisured lovers. There are also symbolic figures of the Dog Star and the Bull. The colors are deep blues and rich yellows, and the effect is one of great space, grandeur and beauty. Whatever the mural means, it will probably go down in history as Rockwell Kent's finest work in color.

The curtain on the stage, also designed by the two artists, folds back like a Japanese screen, and runs by electricity. This curtain and the projection machine in the balcony carry out the idea of the mural. Kent has painted

a modernistic sun with rays of the stage curtain, while the moon is represented by the ray of the projection machine.

The Cinema seats only 317 patrons on the floor, and forty-two in the balcony. Each patron occupies an individual arm chair, designed by the Frankl Galleries, of black lacquer, upholstered in tangerine suede. Sufficient space has been left between rows so that one may pass back and forth without inconveniencing others.

The foyer of the Cinema is one of its most admired features. The ceiling represents the sky, and there is a modernistic chandelier. The rug is a light grey, and the walls harmonize in a grey slightly darker. The panels are hung with a group of Rockwell Kent's choicest works in black and white — some of them reproductions of individual figures from the murals, others well-known works of Mr. Kent's which have previously been exhibited in the world's leading art galleries.

The Cape Cinema, of which Mr. Ralph Westerman is manager, opened with the first showing of "With Byrd at the South Pole." The summer's program has been a series of pre-release talking pictures, most of which had their American premiere at this little Cape



Lovers in the Milky Way, from Rockwell Kents' Mural, Cape Cinema

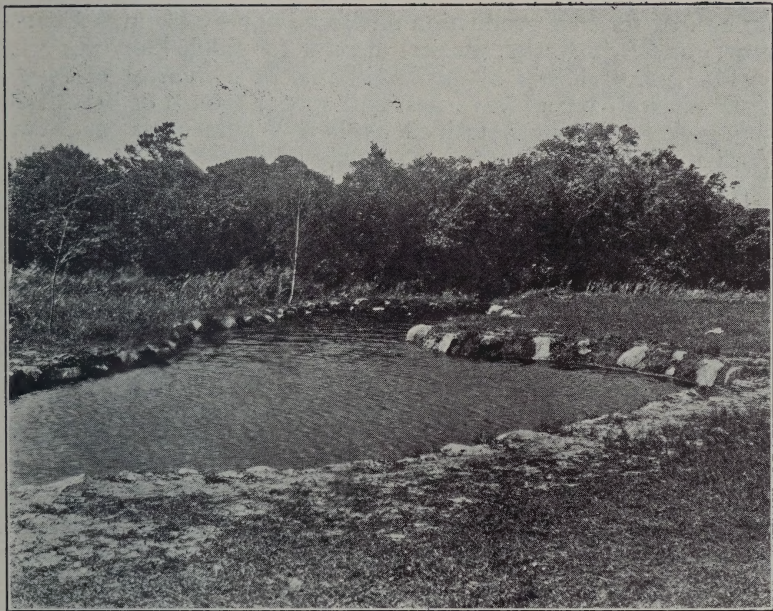


Figure from Mural at the Cape
Cinema

Cod art theatre, before they had been shown in New York Boston or any other city. On Tuesdays, when a children's matinee is given, many grown-ups come to see revivals of the best silent pictures of Chaplin, Pickford and Fairbanks.

At the Playhouse some of the most successful recent bills have been Alice Brady in "Enter Madame," Chrystal Herne and Charles Trowbridge in "The Constant Wife," and Chrystal Herne and Romney Brent in "The Royal Family," also "Broken Dishes" with Bette Davis, a "Playhouse discovery," returning from Broadway success to play a star's role in the theatre where she began her stage career. Henry Hull and Edith Barrett came from New York direct from their season's run there in "Michael and Mary," which meant the Cape saw this latest Milne play before Chicago, Boston or any other city. Mr. Hull and Miss Barrett remained for Sir J. M. Barrie's "Mary Rose," then follow Alice Brady in "The Road to

Rome,' 'with Pedro de Cordoba; and Tom Powers, noted Theatre Guild Star, in Bernard Shaw's "The Devil's Disciple."



Goldfish Pond in Gardens adjoining Cape Playhouse and Cape Cinema

Thursday afternoons at the Playhouse, Bobby Fulton, who began his career with the great Tony Sarg, gives a series of puppet shows for children — though his audiences are always sprinkled with grown-ups, who are fascinated at the art of this great puppet master.

On August 25th the Playhouse opens its new edition of the famous Cape Cod Follies, this year entitled "Ship Shapes." The engagement is announced for two weeks only, then Boston and Providence will be visited, and finally New York, which took so kindly to the first Cape Cod Follies last year.

Stewart Baird, who directed last year's Follies, is the author, lyricist and stage director of the forthcoming "Ship Shapes." The composers are an interesting trio — Peggy Ellis, New York Junior League debutante whose pianologue was a feature of last year's "Follies"; Kenneth Burton, whose new operetta is

announced for Fall production on Broadway by Herman Gantvoort; and Lew Kesler, musical director for Eddie Dowling.

The cast of "Ship Shapes" will include a number of New York musical comedy favorites, and special groups of beautiful young women dancers trained by Ned Wayburn at his New York studios.

With Playhouse and Cinema providing the most distinguished theatrical entertainment for those who summer at the Cape, and a pair of "artistic" theatres a pronounced commercial success, the eyes of the theatrical world are turned upon the young man of thirty-one who is responsible for conceiving and carrying out this highly successful, intelligent and unique "Cape Playground."

✓ ✓ ✓

"When a Broadway producer, lamenting recently over the sad state of the legitimate theatre, declared that the only hope of saving the speaking stage was through the little theatre groups, he reckoned without the summer theatres scattered throughout the country at vacation resorts. One of the most successful of these projects is the Cape Playhouse at Dennis, Cape Cod, an eighteenth century church converted into a theatre four years ago by Raymond Moore, a young Provincetown painter who now finds himself at the head of a unique theatre development. His project has so expanded that the Playhouse is now only a part of a large development which includes two theatres — the other the new Cape Cinema, the most beautiful "art" motion picture playhouse in America."

BOSTON TRAVELLER.

"The Cape Playhouse, a summer theatre, has for the past three seasons with great success featured Broadway plays and distinguished Broadway players under the management of Raymond Moore. An entirely new departure in motion picture theatre architecture and interior decoration has now been worked out under Mr. Moore's direction in the Cape Cinema. This is the first time that artists of national reputation have been engaged to decorate an American motion picture playhouse."

NEW YORK SUN.

"CAPE PLAYGROUND"

